

Teams Must Do The Laundry

Communication issues and conflicts are normal even for high-functioning teams. Strong teams know how to deal with such obstacles efficiently. They deal with these “laundry” issues regularly. Are you in a work group that seldom, if ever, meets? If conflict and internal communication issues remain, your team is missing a vital piece of the puzzle. Charismatic leaders and powerful pep talks don’t replace the need for team members to roll up their sleeves and get this work done. It takes guts and getting vulnerable: “Sally, how have I done sharing information with you this week? Do you feel that I’m working more effectively with you?” Learn to communicate with this level of closeness and familiarity among your team members and you’ll experience higher morale, notice lower absenteeism, and be happier about your job.



Eat Slower; Gain Less

It tastes so good, and I can’t wait to have seconds—ZOOM! There’s evidence that very fast eaters who eat until they are full are three times more likely to gain weight than others who don’t eat fast. During the holiday season, try enjoying what you’re eating, but take your sweet time doing it. You will probably eat less. The idea is not new. “Gentle eating” seminars are a key component to many eating disorder programs, and what they teach can be a strategy that will work for you.



Light-Duty Coworkers and You

Don’t assume a co-worker recovering from an injury is faking his or her need for light duty. Many injured people in their initial recovery period may demonstrate few signs of distress others can see. The injured worker may even have little or no pain. Your frustration at performing laborious tasks may prompt you to question the legitimacy of your co-worker’s light duty. Recovering workers are vulnerable to peer confrontations, even if the communication is nonverbal. Returning to full duty too quickly raises the risk of another injury, which will result in an even longer recovery period.



Is a Virtual Assistant the Answer?

Have you ever said to yourself, “If only there were someone or some service that could stay on top of my progress or handle the details, I know I could get this thing done!”? If you wrestle with accomplishing exercise goals, getting things done on time, or procrastinating on important personal projects, the thought of using a virtual assistant (VA) service may not have crossed your mind as a workable solution. VA services locally or abroad work by the hour and tackle tedious, essential tasks. Surf the Web for your personal “virtual assistant” to find one. Now you know such a service may be as close as your fingertips.



Family Gatherings and Holiday Stress

Is it going to be another stressful and exhausting time orchestrating a huge family get-together again this holiday season? Here's a novel idea: Why not choose to take a break and skip it this year? If your annual gatherings happen because "that's the way it's always been," but you've also wondered, "when will I get a break?", maybe this is the year to start. This doesn't mean you have to completely eliminate socializing and family togetherness. But, if all the responsibility falls on your shoulders—perhaps even despite your previous attempts to share the load—*because you've always done it or because you do such a good job*, then maybe you and the entire gang will benefit from a break. Preparation, shopping, meal planning, cleaning, and laundry take a physical and emotional toll. Taking the assertive step and insisting that your role in a family tradition must change can be difficult. You may struggle with guilt, feeling your decision will disappoint loved ones. Talking about your feelings with a close friend or professional, such as your EAP, will help. Next year if you feel reenergized, you may choose to come back, delegate some of the chores, and really make a splash.

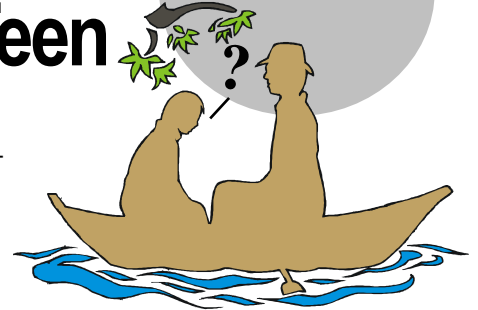


Better Teaching Moments for Your Teen

It's not easy to get a teenager to readily accept your point of view.

The term that describes the window of opportunity for doing so is often referred to as a "teaching moment." How do you recognize teaching moments so you can take advantage of them and add to the quality and happiness of your teen's life? A teaching moment is an opportunity, usually of short duration. It is characterized by understanding or insight in response to an event that you may have expected would have a different outcome. When offering understanding or insight to a teen, it is helpful if you:

- 1) Avoid the "I told you so" approach. Instead, ask "what" and "how" questions to help guide the teen to insight.
- 2) Verbally praise the teen for discovering the answer and being open to accepting it. "Teaching moments" often become memorable times for both you and the teen.



Think: (Office) Safety

It's not a construction site, so why should you need to think safety in a quiet office setting? Although getting hit by a flying file cabinet is pretty remote, accidental injuries in office settings are plentiful nationwide. The perception that workplace injuries are less likely in offices increases risk, because thinking safety and prevention is an afterthought. Musculoskeletal disorders are the most common type of accidental office injuries, and the back is the most commonly affected body part. Back injuries in offices are usually caused by lifting something heavy or *being in the wrong position* when you try to lift something. Slips and falls are also common in office settings. You're more likely to be off work longer recuperating from an injury if you are an older worker, but the younger you are, the more likely it is that you will be injured! Reduce injuries in the workplace by asking for help when moving something heavy—a box, a chair, a table, or a bookcase.



Secrets for Advancing Your Career

Demonstrating your ability to rise to the next level is important if you want to advance your career. Understanding the difference between *quantity of work* and *effective, quality work* is critical to this process. Most employees struggle with the distinction. High output makes you valuable to your organization. Providing high-quality, effective work, however, advances the organization's goals. For example, you are asked to create a 15-page report within three days. You submit an 18-page report in two days—an example of quantity, but you may have missed the goal. In a second scenario, you write a 15-page report in three days, and the first page is a concise, quick-reading executive summary. That's effective, quality work!

